

From: Steve at The Otter Project [mailto:steve1096@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Saturday, October 15, 2005 3:55 PM
To: mlpacomments@resources.ca.gov
Subject: MLPAComments: MPA site description

Hi All!

It is my understanding that today is the final deadline for site descriptions of single MPAs. Attached is the description that I hope fulfills all the requirements of the Master Plan Framework.

I look forward to this proposal being included in the evaluations.

Sincerely,
Steve Shimek

If all the beasts were gone, men would die
from a great loneliness of spirit, for whatever
happens to the beasts also happens to the man.
All things are connected.

*-Chief Seattle of the Suwamish Tribe, letter to President
Franklin Pierce*

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Submission of Single MPA for Evaluation

Name: Point Pedernales to Point Conception State Marine Conservation Area

Summary: The goal of this proposal is to add protection to the southern sea otter, a species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Restrictions in this area are meant to minimize conflicts between net and pot fishing and sea otters.

In informal conversations, sea otter scientists (Drs. Jim Estes and Tim Tinker) have suggested that increased protection in this specific area could enhance recovery.

In addition, this region is the confluence of the California Current and the counter-current in the southern California Bight. This is an area of extraordinary diversity, uniqueness, and importance.

Although this proposal includes a single MPA (and therefore does not require justification as a network), this Conservation area produces larvae and adults that enter the current that bathes the northern Channel Islands and the Channel Island MPA network.

Boundaries: North: Point Pedernales, due west, 3 nautical miles. West: Three mile limit of State waters. South: Point Conception, due west, 3 nautical miles. East: Shoreline.

Regulations: Shore fishing only. Fishing for coastal pelagics only, one nautical mile or more from shore. Trap, pot, and gill nets specifically not allowed.

Area: Approximately 33 square nautical miles (runtime error on report)

Shoreline: Approximately 13.9 nautical miles (runtime error on report)

Expand upon existing MPA? Yes, Vandenburg Marine Resources Act Ecological Reserve.

Overall Goal: Protection to the southern sea otter, a species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Restrictions in this area are meant to minimize conflicts between net and pot fishing and sea otters. This area also serves many of the goals of the MLPA.

Specific Goals and Objectives this MPA addresses:

Goal 1. To protect the natural diversity and abundance of marine life, and the structure, function, and integrity of marine ecosystems.

1. Protect areas of high species diversity and maintain species diversity and abundance, consistent with natural fluctuations, of populations in representative habitats.
2. Protect areas with diverse habitat types in close proximity to each other.
3. Protect natural size and age structure and genetic diversity of populations in representative habitats.

4. Protect natural trophic structure and food webs in representative habitats.
 5. Protect ecosystem structure, function, integrity and ecological processes to facilitate recovery of natural communities from disturbances both natural and human induced.
- Goal 2. To help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted.
1. Help protect or rebuild populations of rare, threatened, endangered, depleted, or overfished species, where identified, and the habitats and ecosystem functions upon which they rely.
 2. Protect larval sources and enhance reproductive capacity of species most likely to benefit from MPAs through retention of large, mature individuals.
 3. Protect selected species and the habitats on which they depend while allowing the harvest of migratory, highly mobile, or other species where appropriate through the use of State Marine Conservation Areas and State Marine Parks.
- Goal 4. To protect marine natural heritage, including protection of representative and unique marine life habitats in central California waters, for their intrinsic value.
2. Protect, and replicate to the extent possible, representatives of all marine habitats identified in the MLPA or the MPF across a range of depths.

Species, habitats, or ecosystem functions are of most concern in this area?

- Sea otters. Rationale described in summary.
- Larval production for Channel Islands MPA network.
- Recovery of kelp beds and rockfish species in Southern California Bight. The State of California is spending millions of dollars to help restore kelp beds along coastal southern California. Most of these efforts have failed. Kelp beds serve as important nursery habitat for commercially valuable fish and invertebrate species. There is little question that recovery of the southern sea otter would improve kelp recovery by removing sea urchins, the limiting factor for kelp in most areas.

Area meets the following California State Interagency Coordinating Committee Criteria:

A. Potential Biological Criteria

1. The proposed site will protect or restore rare, threatened, or endangered native species or habitats.
2. The proposed site will protect outstanding, representative, or imperiled marine species, communities, habitats, or ecosystems.
3. The proposed site will protect populations of one or more fish species that have been declared “overfished” by the National Marine Fisheries Service. (lingcod, cabezon, greenlings, and rockfish (brown, gopher, yellowtail, blue, vermillion, canary, bocaccio, and copper)).
4. The proposed site will protect populations of harvested species that are of concern to state or federal fishery managers.
5. One or more habitats within the proposed site are designated as essential fish habitat (EFH) by the National Marine Fisheries Service.
6. The proposed site will protect habitat, or biological communities, populations, species or gene pools that are under-represented or not replicated in the existing network of state marine managed areas.

7. The proposed site will protect connections between geographic areas and/or habitat types, including estuarine and marine, wetland and intertidal, intertidal and subtidal, and deep and shallow water.

8. The proposed site is biologically highly productive.

9. The proposed site contains multiple habitat types.

B. Potential Socio-Economic Criteria

3. The proposed site has historically received relatively little fishing effort.

5. Designation of the proposed site is likely to have a positive socio-economic impact.
(Kelp recovery to the south and east)

C. Potential Geological Criteria

1. The proposed site has outstanding or unique geological features that contribute to the biological productivity of the area. (This site is on one of the two major bioregion breaks in the State)

D. Potential Management and Enforcement Criteria

1. The proposed site overlaps or is adjacent to an existing protected or managed area, thus facilitating enforcement. (Vandenberg AFB)

E. Potential Evaluation and Research Criteria

1. The proposed site will provide an opportunity for scientific research or monitoring in outstanding, representative, or imperiled marine habitats or ecosystems.

2. The proposed site has or will have funding for scientific research or monitoring.
(PISCO has multiple sites within and adjacent to this important region)

3. The proposed site has been the site of previous scientific research or monitoring studies. (PISCO).